

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 89

By McCord

A RESOLUTION to recognize Fire Chief Larry Graves of Alcoa on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who in their years of work have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm; and

WHEREAS, Larry Graves is one such estimable person who has served with distinction since 1992 as Chief of the City of Alcoa Fire Department, culminating a forty-one year career as a firefighter; he recently announced his plans to retire; and

WHEREAS, a 1962 graduate of Everett High, Larry Graves began his career as a firefighter with the Alcoa Fire Department on June 12, 1965, leaving in April of 1966 when he was drafted into the United States Army and returning to April of 1968, after completing his military service; and

WHEREAS, a man of courage, conviction and a keen sense of duty, Chief Graves has seen many changes over the years since his early days with the Alcoa Fire Department when the city had only one fire station and six full-time firefighters; and

WHEREAS, today, the City of Alcoa Fire Department boasts three stations, thirty full-time firemen, and ten volunteers to handle the more than 1,200 calls per year, a number which far surpasses the 200 calls annually that young fireman Graves first encountered; and

WHEREAS, rising through the ranks over the years, Larry Graves was named Alcoa's first Assistant Chief/Training Officer in 1986, he has always understood the importance of proper training in all aspects of work within the fire department, from fighting fires to making coffee; and

WHEREAS, a highly skilled individual, Fire Chief Graves earned an associate degree in criminal justice and fire science from Walter State Community College and completed the

Municipal Specialist in Public Safety certification with the University of Tennessee Municipal Training Program; and

WHEREAS, Chief Graves has completed additional training and certification as a Firefighter III, Fire Instructor I, First Responder in Emergency Medical Service (EMS), and Hazmat Tech, as well as class work for preparation and response to Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction, Emergency Response to Terrorism, and an executive development program; and

WHEREAS, a dedicated professional, Mr. Graves has attended the Self-Assessment and Peer Assessor Workshops from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International and has other training and certifications in all levels of fire education, firefighting, rescue, leadership, and management; and

WHEREAS, since being named Fire Chief in 1992, Chief Graves was instrumental in establishing Alcoa's EMS First Responder Program in 1994, the construction of two new fire stations, and the city's Public Safety Building, which houses both the city's fire department and police departments; and

WHEREAS, a firefighter's firefighter who understands the keys to fire prevention, Fire Chief Larry Graves strongly believes in the importance of smoke detectors and fire prevention education, and sadly recalling tragic fires during his tenure in Alcoa– the Springbook School fire, the Tennessee Army National Guard Armory fire fought with the Maryville fire department, and the two house fires worked in -24 degree weather; and

WHEREAS, an appointed assistant to the Commissioner for the Department of Commerce and Insurance Division of Fire Prevention Chief Graves served as and lent his time and considerable experience as a member of the Blount County 911 Board, the Blount County Fire Protection District Board of Directors, and the Blount County Volunteer Rescue Squad Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, although retired, Mr. Graves plans to continue his involvement in the fire service as an assessment team member for the Commission on Fire Accreditation International, traveling across the country accrediting fire departments, and serving on the board of the Blount County Fire Department; and

WHEREAS, greatly admired and respected by his peers, Chief Graves was the 2000-2001 President of the Tennessee Fire Chief's Association, a member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, Secretary and former Chairman of the East Tennessee Regional Council of Fire Chiefs, and an assessment team member for the Commission on Fire Accreditation; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Larry Graves was the 2005 American Red Cross Firefighter of the Year, District Sertoman of the Year in 1993, a member of the 1997 Class of Leadership Blount, and Chairman of the United Way Public Service Division in 1994; and

WHEREAS, a true family man, Larry Graves has been married to the former Sue Walker since 1969. The Graves are both loyal fans of the University of Tennessee Lady Vols, and he plans to spend some of his free time supporting the team, participating in the good works of the Blount County Shrine Club and Shriner's Hospitals, and enjoying his new motorcycle, a 2007 Harley-Davidson; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Larry Graves has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his department, his community, and the firefighting men and women of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Fire Chief Larry Graves on his forty-one years of distinguished service to the City of Alcoa Fire Department and the good people of Blount County and extend to him our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.